

# HURRICANE MITCH RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE



## USAID/Nicaragua Hurricane Mitch Reconstruction Program

(U.S. Millions of Dollars)	\$103.6
Public Health	30.6
Economic Reactivation	53.5
Disaster Mitigation	6.6
Education	4.5
Municipal Infrastructure	2.9
Transparency and Accountability	1.0
Food Aid	4.5



Departments of Nicaragua  
Affected by Hurricane Mitch

## NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSOLTEGA FARMERS

**Posoltega, Nicaragua**—Residents of the Finca Santa Maria resettlement community recently brought their pigs to market. They were joined by producers from other communities selling a variety of products at the newly established Posoltega farmers market. The new market, set up by CARE with funding from USAID's Hurricane Mitch Reconstruction Program, gives area farmers a chance to increase their incomes by selling directly to the public.

The people of this municipality were particularly affected by Hurricane Mitch in October 1998, losing crops and homes from heavy flooding. A \$750,000 USAID agricultural rehabilitation project specifically for Posoltega, through CARE, has helped many of these farmers to recover from their losses.



*Poultry breeding is one of several activities designed to generate income for survivors of the Casita mudslide who reside in the Finca Santa Maria resettlement community.*



*Farmers in Posoltega can increase their incomes by selling directly to the public at the new farmer's market set up by a USAID funded CARE project.*

A key component of the project has been the establishment of a revolving credit system administered through community participation. The communities have become closely involved in the recovery and reinvestment process of their own resources. As a result, after attaining a good harvest, over 50% of the financial resources for new activities will come from the communities through their revolving funds. Using the training and skills they have learned through the project, including cost/benefit analyses, farmers are also making decisions on the best way to reinvest their resources. Investment priority is being given to crops that provide food and crops that provide higher profits.

The USAID- funded CARE project in Posoltega is promoting spe-

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## NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES...

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cific economic activities to address the more complex circumstances of the community of Finca Santa Maria. The 350 families in the community are survivors of the Casita mudslide that killed over 2,000 people.

Their houses and farms were destroyed and the area is unsafe for them to rebuild. Installed in new houses that each family built through a CARE funded program, they now must find other ways to secure a livelihood.

The USAID/CARE project has designed activities that can be carried out on the 69 acres of farmland granted to the community and in individual backyards including poultry breeding, egg production, pig farming, ornamental plant gardening and irrigated vegetable and plantain production. A total of 150 families in Santa Maria are participating in the USAID/CARE activities.

Concepcion Diaz has a thriving ornamental plant garden in her small backyard and has already received plant orders from a nursery. Juana Lechado set up a small greenhouse in her yard and will sell green pepper seedlings to local farmers. Larger scale vegetable production, with an irrigation system, will be managed by 40 families on 17 acres of the communal property.

Adela Flores is the only woman in a group of nine that is managing one of the two pig farm modules of the program. In a newly



*Adela Flores hopes that pig breeding, set up through the USAID/CARE Posoltega project, will provide an income for her family.*

constructed cement and chain link enclosure, Flores helps feed and keep clean 25 sows and 3 boars. Flores, who lost seven family members including her husband in the Casita mudslide, is hopeful that swine breeding will provide economic security for her and the other five members of her household.

Next to the pig farms, three poultry farms, each with 1,000 birds, will be managed by groups of 10, thus providing an income from egg sales for 30 families.

Ana Judith Espinoza belongs to a group of seven women and three men who manage one of the hen houses. An egg production of about 63 dozen a day and a permanent buyer has given each member of the group a small weekly income and money to buy chicken feed and medicines to keep the birds healthy.

"This is working out well for me," said Espinoza, whose husband was also killed in the mudslide. "I have fresh eggs for my family and some money I can count on every week."



*Juana Lechado grows green peppers in a small greenhouse set up in her backyard. She will sell the seedlings to local farmers.*

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